

Art of Forgiving

(Poetry Non-Rhyming)

By John Breska

Forgiveness is a measure of wisdom,
for it closes the door on a hurt shared
by the actions of two entities
and becomes the salve of healing
for those wounded in the tangle of life
and if not remedied,
it festers like gangrene,
causing discomfort until addressed
and put to rest

The Widow's Message

(Humor)

By Holly Johannes

Husband dies
Left alone
Hears instructions
On the phone
Destiny calls,
“I’ve left a gift –
A secret panel
for you to lift.”
She raises the board,
What should she find?
A black widow spider tucked up inside
The spider looks up
The lady doth gasp
Saw a note flash by
as she collapsed
“You found me!” it said
And, yep, it was true
Cuz he was dead
Now she is, too

Repairs

(Poetry Rhyming)

By Timothy P. McDermott

Repairing my mind
Repairing my soul
Repairing my purpose
To make my life whole

Repairing my feelings
My thoughts within
I feel my new life
Is about to begin

Clearing out junk
So that I may see
Just what has really
Been happening to me

Clearing out poisons
And Strengthening bonds
So I can decide
Which side I am on

Making me stronger
From cellar to attic
So my actions are true
And not automatic

I start my life over
Now clearer of sight
Clearer of thought
And of wrong and right

My Demon is gone now
I've closed it away
Now in a good place
And here will I stay.

Bella's Umbrella

(Short, Short Story)

By Holly Johannes

Bella was very excited; her Grandma and Grandpa were coming for a visit today! They always bring something special and tell Bella lots of stories.

When Bella saw her Grandparents' car pulling into the driveway, she jumped up and ran to the door. She flung the door open and raced outside to meet them. Grandpa greeted her with a big hug. Grandma came around the side of the car and POP! She opened up a big, red umbrella.

“WOW!” exclaimed Bella, “It’s so beautiful!”

“I’m glad you like it, Bella,” said Grandma. “We brought it just for you. It has been on many adventures with us, and we hope it will go on many adventures with you, too!”

Bella was thrilled; she loved to share things with stories

Just as Bella reached out to grab the umbrella, a huge gust of wind lifted it up into the sky!

“Oh no!” gasped Bella, as the umbrella flew higher and higher.

The wind was blowing very hard now and it looked like it was about to rain. Grandma and Grandpa scooped Bella up and took her inside, out of the storm, while the big, red umbrella continued to soar into the sky.

The umbrella tumbled over and over in the blustery air. Nearby, a little bird was trying to fly. It was getting tossed about in the wild currents. The wind swept the umbrella right toward the young bird and Plop! The bird grabbed onto the handle with both feet and rested his wings at last.

“Whew,” thought the bird, as it caught its breath.

The umbrella whirled over the rooftops of the village and then over the treetops of the forest. It whooshed over a giant farm field and headed straight toward a barn!

Just as it looked like it was going to crash into the side of the barn, the wind spun the umbrella upside-down and the little bird was flung through the open barn window! The bird landed on a pile of soft straw. It shook the water off its wings, stretched them out, and lay across the straw, letting out a big sigh of relief.

Meanwhile, a turtle was looking for food along the riverbank. The rain made the earth very slippery. The turtle slipped on the muddy grass and plunked into the river! A rush of rainwater tumbled the turtle over and over on the river rocks.

The turtle's shell bounced off a big rock, and she went flying into the air! The turtle flew directly into the red umbrella and Splash! It landed on its top with the turtle inside. The turtle rode the umbrella down the raging river, like a pirate sailing the stormy seas.

At that very moment, a groundhog was sound asleep in his burrow. The rushing water of the river overflowed and cascaded right into the groundhog's hole!

The groundhog's eyes popped open just in time to see the water pouring in. He started to run for another exit, but the water was coming too fast. It picked him up and washed him right out of his tunnel! Swoosh, like a waterslide, the water shot him out of his hole.

The groundhog was airborne, heading for something big and red. Thud! The groundhog landed inside Bella's umbrella, and the little turtle was bounced out! The turtle landed safely in a calm pool next to the river. Her eyes grew bigger as she saw all of the delicious food waiting to be munched. As the turtle snacked, the groundhog continued on down the river.

The umbrella remained strong as it sailed down the rapids. Just as the groundhog started to worry about how far down the river Bella's umbrella had taken him, the umbrella struck a beaver dam! The groundhog crawled onto a pile of sturdy tree branches. What a relief! His friend, the beaver, would certainly help to rebuild the groundhog's tunnel once the rain lets up!

The wind whizzed again and the red umbrella shot back into the air. It made a giant circle before heading back toward the earth. Now, it was the umbrella's turn to hitch a ride. Its handle hooked onto the bike rack of a passing car. The car towed the umbrella gently alongside the river, past a farm field, through the forest, and all around the village. At last, the car pulled into a driveway.

Bella was looking out the window, wondering if she would ever see her new umbrella again. Her eyes lit up as her mom's car pulled into the driveway with, none other than, Bella's beautiful, red umbrella in tow.

"Grandma! Grandpa! LOOK!!" Her grandparents giggled at the sight, "Well, I guess it was time the umbrella had an adventure all its own!"

Doing Time

(personal essay)

By Gregory Lott

From my mother's wombs I arrived here unaware and lacking credentials.
To have been otherwise would have proven beneficial.
Time now my confinement is established and official.
The result of consequential endeavors weighted and balanced.
Then I claimed unawareness should extended to my talents.
From birth, a sentence or opportunity.
Time, as much as pain allowed me to become sublime in ingenuity.

I conceived time existing in only as a measurement, and much to my detriment.
But time was not that measure, still I attempted to be so clever.
Time vanished before my eyes, I knew I had run out of it along with my lies.
Time was nothing touched with hands or my mind, I felt its effects upon my body and wined.
My guard and eventually my executioner it was known and considered.
Eventually to overcome and subdue me on the day of my deliverance.
Time is a peculiar spirit allowing anything done to it but be destroyed.
I have gone everywhere seeking anything to employ.
Given or made, it allows me not to create it, and still I debated it.
From this side of the universe to the other time is on the move, always changing being consumed.
Time remains constant and always passing even after the day of my doom.
I came not knowing and will leave with only a hope.
Science proves it knows not time haven used all of its scopes.
Religion attempts to make known time is short.
Then fills us with guilt using goons and cohorts.
I have come to clearly see time is the gift of consciousness and is on my side.
I'll make and use the most of it till the day of my demise.

Erythra Thalassa

(Military Experience Non-Poetry)

By Joseph S. Spence Sr.

During the summer of 1982, I sat on the bank of the Red Sea. It was Saturday night, April 10, 1982, the day before Easter. I was on a military mission in the Middle East, maintaining peace between Egypt and Israel to prevent any additional armed conflict.ⁱ My mind was in a transitory state. I sat there reflecting on my family and the distance between us.

The moon was full, red, and reflecting over the Sea. Its reflection cast a path right to the bank, where I sat with my military comrades in arms. The following words came to my mind about the Sea during my reflection:

Your coral reefs relax many minds. They were undoubtedly relaxing to see and touch. I touched your surface in the tourist town of Sharm el-Sheik. Today, you are looking royal with a red and beautiful sunset. You rocked as I hummed a song during the process.

Based on my history studies, you were kind to King Darius of Persia,ⁱⁱ who sailed on your waves. You helped Alexander the Great in command of his forces.ⁱⁱⁱ On the other hand, the contentious Augustus Bonaparte of Rome was not kind when he claimed to have captured you.^{iv} How could he? You are free and belong to no one in captivity. You are not a pool in someone's backyard.

Sitting there, talking with my comrades, I ran my hands over your warm and soothingly

splashy soft surface. It stimulates my palm. Your essence was balmy and misty under the full moon. My hands sunk below your curvy and calm blue waves. Your response was a mere ripple. I had expected a fish to grab my fingers.

Moses had a big splash with you when he liberated Israel's children from Egypt and Pharaoh. You helped him through and across your midst. You created a significant Exodus in humanity's history. You saved a nation—"Yam Suph!"^v Such a spectacular event of remembrance.

My tour of duty ends soon, and to American and my family members, I will return home. One day, I shall return to relax with you. Take a snorkeling dive below your splashing surface. There, I will be able to smell the spices of medieval times, spilled during military adventures from cargo ships, and resting in the depth of your tectonic plates—undisturbed! How can I forget you and such a precious moment in history as this?

One day, with the rising sun on the coast of Eilat,^{vi} in a glass-bottom boat, I will splendidly relax. There I will do some fishing on your calm and balmy surface.

Before I leave for home, I have one vital question. Please settle my instinct and calm my nerves. It may not appeal to you as anything of significance; however, it means a lot to me. "Will your name ever change from Red?"

Until I see you again, my dear friend. Continue to moisten the Gulf of Aqaba.^{vii} Quench Sinai's Peninsula^{viii} hot and dusty thirst, and flow well,
—Red Sea! (*Erythra Thalassa*)!

ⁱ "Camp David Peace Accords." *History.com*, 14 Nov. 2019, <https://www.history.com/topics/middle-east/camp-david-accords>. Accessed 29 June 2021.

ⁱⁱ "Persian Rule Of Ancient Egypt." *Facts And Details*, King Darius Capturing Egypt. <http://factsanddetails.com/world/cat56/sub364/entry-6103.html>. Accessed 29 June 2021.

ⁱⁱⁱ "UNESCO." *Alexandria and Egypt*, <https://en.unesco.org/silkroad/content/alexandria>. Accessed 29 June 2021.

^{iv} "The Roman Empire In The First Century-Augustus." *Ruling Egypt*. *PBS*, <https://www.pbs.org/empires/romans/empire/augustus.html>. Accessed 29 June 2021.

^v "Red Sea." *New World Encyclopedia*, . 6 Jul 2015, 22:41 UTC. 29 Jun 2021, 18:24 https://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/p/index.php?title=Red_Sea&oldid=989212. Accessed June 29, 2021.

^{vi} "Eilat." *Jewish Virtual Library A Project of American-Israeli Cooperative Enterprise (AICE)*, <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/eilat>. Accessed 29 June 2021.

^{vii} Britannica, The Editors of Encyclopedia. "Gulf of Aqaba". *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 11 Apr. 2014, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Gulf-of-Aqaba>. Accessed 29 June 2021.

^{viii} Britannica, The Editors of Encyclopedia. "Sinai Peninsula". *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 16 Oct. 2020, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Sinai-Peninsula>. Accessed 29 June 2021.